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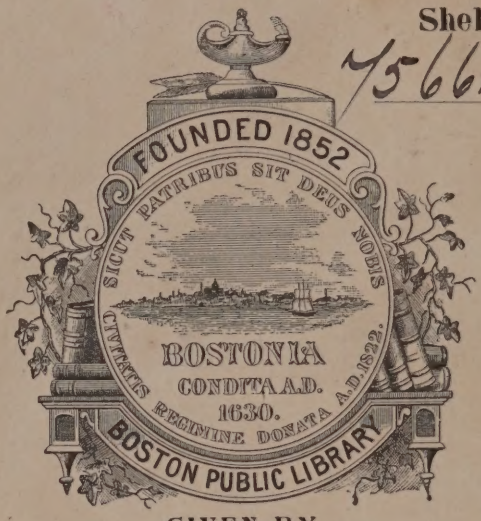

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REPORT

ON

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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WITH

FREEMASONRY.

MADE TO THE CONVENTION ASSEMBLED AT BOSTON,

MAY 19, 1831.

By REV. JOSEPH GOFFE.

For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, neither hid, that shall not be known.———Luke xii. 2.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICE OF THE BOSTON PRESS.

1831.

Fr. & Mas. vol. 289
14 504
Edward Gassett
Apr. 15, 1858

In the Convention of Delegates from 10 Counties in this Commonwealth, (consisting of upwards of 250 members,) which convened in the City of Boston, on the 19th of May, 1831, for the purpose of "consulting on the common good, and to investigate the nature, principles and tendency of Freemasonry,"—a Committee, (of which the Rev. *Joseph Goffe*, of Worcester County, was Chairman,) was appointed "to inquire whether intelligent Christians or Churches can knowingly fellowship Freemasonry or its adhering members, without becoming accessaries after the fact, and participating in the horrid crimes of which the Masonic Institution is now proved guilty?"—and having taken the subject into serious consideration, made the annexed Report.

REPORT.

The Committee appointed by this Convention, to inquire, 'whether intelligent Christians or churches can knowingly fellowship Freemasonry, or its adhering members, without becoming accessaries, after the fact, and participating in the horrid crimes of which the Masonic Institution is now proved guilty;' having taken the subject into their serious consideration, ask leave to submit the following

REPORT.

Your Committee feel themselves fully authorized to assume it as an undeniable fact, that the recent disclosures which have been made of the forms, ceremonies, principles, oaths, penalties, and tendencies of Freemasonry, are correct. It is now, indeed, much too late to call in question, or even *to doubt*, that the dark mysteries of the Lodge Room are laid open to the view of the world. This has been done by those who have personally explored the inmost recesses of the mystic temple, and even worshipped in its holiest places. And since they have been laid before the public in almost every form, attested by hundreds and thousands of credible witnesses; by judicial records; by the testimony of adhering Masons, and sealed by them in the blood of Morgan and others, no candid man *need* be ignorant, and no intelligent Christian or church *ought* to be ignorant of them. Ignorance on this subject is highly culpable, and nothing but the madness of folly can deny the truth.

On the ground, then, of the truth of these disclosures, your committee proceed to say, that they are totally unable to discover how any *understanding Christian*, or any church of the Lord Jesus Christ, organized on Gospel principles, actuated by a Gospel spirit, and walking by Gospel rules, can, consistently with their duty, hold any fellowship whatever with the Masonic Institution, or with its adhering members and supporters. In past times, when the nature and operations of that mystic society were enveloped in darkness, and its deluded members trumpeted its praises in every ear, as embracing every thing great and good, as a scientific, moral, and charitable institution, descended from heaven, and the *handmaid* of religion, if not religion itself, both Christians and churches had some excuse for passing it by unnoticed. But *now*, since the veil of secrecy has been removed, and the whole arcana of the Lodge-room, Chapter, Council, Consistory, &c. with all their follies and crimes, have been revealed and exposed to the public gaze, the plea of ignorance

can no longer avail. There is now no cloak to cover their sins: but every adherent and defender of that unholy cause, shows himself an accomplice in all the guilt and atrocities with which the Masonic Institution stands justly charged. To be guilty of fraud, perjury, murder, arson, or any other crimes, it is not necessary that a person *actually* commit those crimes. If he *approve of and justify* them when committed by others, and hold in his affections and fellowship the perpetrators of them, he thereby becomes an *accessary* to those crimes, if not in a *legal*, yet certainly in a moral and religious view: he voluntarily makes himself a partaker of other men's sins, and stands justly condemned by all the rules of morality, justice, truth, and the Christian religion.

This we are not unapprised is a bold assertion, and may involve many otherwise respectable men, in a guilt of which, perhaps, they are little aware; and we should not dare thus publicly to advance it, were we not convinced of being sustained by the plainest dictates of morality, common sense, and the oracles of God. If he who sees a thief and *consenteth* with him, is considered in the eyes of the omniscient Judge, as guilty of theft, shall he be accounted innocent who countenances, justifies, and conceals the most atrocious crimes? Shall he be considered as blameless who *consents* to the unlawful shedding of human blood? Shall he be uncondemned who justifies and approves of other men's sins, and holds fellowship with those who he knows are guilty of deeds of darkness, of which it is a shame to speak? By no means: he thereby involves himself in the same guilt. If this be so, what an accumulated load of guilt bears upon the whole masonic Institution, and upon all those Christians and churches who retain in their fellowship, and admit to their communion, the obstinate adherents of that blood stained order! They bring upon themselves the blood of Morgan and all those martyrs who have fallen sacrifices to masonic vengeance, and though, by deception and falsehood, they may escape punishment from men, yet how shall they escape the righteous judgment of God?

Let the two Institutions, the Church and Masonry, be compared and contrasted in their origin, nature and spirit, and the conviction, it seems, must fasten itself, with an iron grasp, upon the understanding and conscience of every fair minded man, that there *ought* not and cannot be any real sympathy or harmony between them. They are directly opposed to each other in every respect, and there is no common principle upon which they can meet or harmonize. They, therefore, who attempt to blend them, (and they are not a few) and make them the same or kindred Institutions, and the one a helper or handmaid of the other, attempt an impossibility. They might as well mingle light with darkness, or fire with water, and make them the same or kindred elements.

What is the Church? It is a holy society, incorporated by the God of heaven, sustained by his power and grace from the beginning of the world to the present time, and destined to flourish forever in the world of glory. It is the kingdom of heaven upon earth; the temple of the living God, or habitation of the Spirit;

and the School of Christ, in which immortal souls, by spiritual culture, are trained up and prepared for their heavenly inheritance. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth ; the salt of the earth ; the light of the world, and the glory of Jehovah ; the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

On the other hand,—What is Masonry? It is an earthborn Institution ; self created, by a company of brick layers and stone cutters: formed in London, June 24, 1717 : upheld by terror—propagated by deception ; guarded by a sword ; shrouded in darkness ; covered with crimes ; stained with blood ; filled with blasphemies, and breathing forth a spirit of vengeance and destruction against all who renounce their allegiance to this mystery of abominations. Masonry, in its whole length and breadth, is as *Anti-Christian* as it is Anti-republican. Its tendency is to corrupt, and, ultimately, to undermine and destroy all our civil and religious institutions, and to spread infidelity, despotism, and misery through the earth.

Such being the nature and spirit of the two Institutions, what fellowship can there be between them? They are diametrically opposed to each other, and are as wide asunder as heaven and the kingdom of darkness. The strong and pointed interrogatories of an inspired apostle almost fail to express the utter impossibility of any companionship between them. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?"

The church of Christ never desired or sought any connection or fellowship with Masonry. It is a kingdom not of this world ; peculiar in its nature, spirit, and object: high, spiritual, and holy, and therefore cannot be mingled with the institutions of men without corrupting its principles, defiling its purity, and so far defeating the sublime and glorious designs of its creation. But Masonry has desired, and sought, and actually obtained, to a lamentable extent, a union with the church. To give itself a sanctified appearance in the view of the world, that it might disarm suspicion, and better attain its own selfish objects, it has stolen shreds and patches from the livery of Heaven, to hide its native deformity, and thus commend itself to the friends of God and the Redeemer. To accomplish his own destructive purposes of deception and ruin, Satan can easily transform himself into the appearance of an angel of light, and even *present himself before the Lord*, and among his faithful subjects and worshippers. And, under the same delusive appearance he has insinuated himself into the churches of Christ, and seduced many of his disciples and followers to join in the unhallowed orgies of his midnight assemblies. For many years after the origin of Masonry, but few if any of the members of the lodge were found in the churches of Christ. The Institution was then considered as connected with the black arts of magic and witchcraft, and holding an intimate communion with the Prince of Darkness.—But not many years since the Grand Lodge, moved by suggestions

from beneath, opened the doors of all the subordinate Lodges for the *gratuitous* admission of the *ministers of religion* to all the mysteries and privileges of the Craft. Prompted by a vain curiosity, enticed by the trappings of the harlot, and the flattering encomiums passed on Masonry, and doubtless by the selfish hopes of personal advantage and distinction, they degradingly submitted to the hoodwink and halter, crowded into the mystic temple, which is full of dead men's skulls, and all uncleanness; and there—O horrid! personally bound themselves by the most savage imprecations to promote its interests, and forever *conceal* all its abominations.

The pastors of churches being thus gained, an appearance of sanctity was thrown around the Institution, which gave it a credit and currency with serious people which it had never before obtained. Encouraged by the example of their Christian leaders, the officers and members of churches followed in their train, and thus swelled the ranks of the fraternity. Multitudes around them, emboldened by such examples, viewed the Institution with a favorable eye. They argued that the Institution must be *good*, or so many great and good men—ministers, professors, and others, never would have joined and supported it, and therefore they pressed forward to its unhallowed embrace, where they were bound by the strong cords of iniquity, and where they were taught the sublime science contained in *Boaz, Jachin, and Mah-hah-bone*—and many of them the sublime mysteries of *Jah-buh-lun and Ma-her-sha-lal-hash-baz.*

This satisfactorily accounts for the unexampled spread of Masonry through our country of late years; and also shews very clearly how the masonic Institution has crept into and defiled the Church. The same persons are members of both institutions, and thus form the connecting link between the Church and the Lodge. They usually hold a good standing in both institutions. They are fellowshipped in both parties, and in this way the Church and the Lodge are drawn into communion with each other. Thus the church becomes polluted, and by suffering this unholy connection to exist, she brings upon herself the guilt and crimes of which Masonry now stands fully convicted. With all the light shed into the dark caverns of the widow's son, and the mysteries of iniquity there performed, and exposed to public view, the church, by her connivance at such abominations, becomes *accessary,* and involves herself in all the blasphemies, perjuries and crimes which now characterize the wunderwurking brotherhood. By such a connection the church is defiled, her glory is tarnished, her discipline is obstructed, her energies are paralyzed, and she is made the mere tool and supporter of the lodge. While men slept the enemy sowed these tares, but now, in the light of day, they ought not to be suffered to grow. They must be rooted up or the harvest will be blasted.

With what holy indignation must the Great Head of the Church look upon this unnatural alliance, surreptitiously formed between his holy kingdom and the kingdom of darkness and sin! No wonder he frowns upon his churches, and sends delusions, divisions heresies and strife into their sacred enclosures, and unless they a-

wake, and separate themselves from this abomination, still sorer judgments may be expected. And what an awful responsibility rests upon those *ministers* and Christian *professors* who have sworn allegiance to a foreign dominion, and still adhere to a system of government and laws, paramount, in their view, to the authority and government of Christ! They have profaned the name and polluted the sanctuary of the Lord. Their example has deceived and destroyed many, and they have brought the stain of blood into the hallowed abodes of purity and love. By their conduct Christ is wounded in the house of his professed friends, and his holy name and religion greatly dishonoured. An enlightened community, seeing their inconsistency in endeavouring to sustain both the church and the lodge, are naturally led to conclude there is nothing valuable in that religion which they profess; and are thus hardened in their unbelief and sin. The ministers and members of churches who have bowed the knee to that image of jealousy, are now the main pillars which support the masonic building. Let *them* not merely *withdraw*, but *dissolve* their connection with that secret assembly, and in this enlightened age, the whole mystic fabric would soon crumble to its base. By their obstinate adherence to an institution so degrading and wicked, they are answerable for all the mischiefs which Masonry has done and will do, and deserve to be rejected and disowned by the church and the world.

But in the present state of things, and as matters now stand, what are the churches to do? How are they to acquit themselves from blame, and be rid of the evil which now presses so heavily upon them? These are important queries, and demand a plain and explicit answer; and happily the answer is at hand, and the path of their duty is obvious. Every organized church possesses in herself the power of her own purification and preservation. The sword of the Spirit is in her own hands, and under the direction of her Lord, she can and ought to separate from her body every incorrigible member of the masonic fraternity. She is invested with the power of *discipline*, which affords an ample remedy for this great and sore evil. In the spirit of meekness and brotherly love, let her institute a process of Christian discipline with every brother who is a member of the lodge, and call him to an account for his conduct. There is no want of just ground for complaint. The institution of Masonry affords numerous points of Scriptural discipline and final excision, and if, after due process and forbearance, he prove obstinate and irreclaimable, let him be separated from the body and turned over to his own company, and even if, the offender be the *pastor* of the church, let him be dealt with, and impeached before a tribunal of his peers. His sacred office ought not to screen him from the just censures of the church. But, if unhappily, as is sometimes the case, a *majority* of the church be Masons, or under masonic influence, so that the process of discipline be arrested, and its end defeated, and the guilty protected, let the minority, after due deliberation and consultation, peaceably *withdraw*, in obedience to the divine commands. "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and

touch not the unclean thing.—Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.—Be not a partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure." It is important that Christians do this; otherwise by partaking of their sins, they will also be made partakers of their plagues.

We are not insensible that discipline upon this subject, introduced into the churches and carried to its ultimate results, would create great *excitement* in the community, and be attended with many unpleasant and troublesome things. The angry passions of the whole masonic fraternity, and of their obsequious minions, would be excited,—the cry of persecution would be raised, and much altercation, division, and disturbance might ensue. But what if all this, and more than this, should be the case, shall the churches be still and neglect their duty, because Satan will rage? Shall they suffer that idolatrous Jezebel to touch and to seduce the servants of God, because the senseless clamor of persecution and proscription will be raised? The fearful and unbelieving may flinch from their duty through dread of consequences, but let the righteous be bold as a lion in the discharge of duty, and leave all consequences with God. What great reformation in morals, politics, or religion, was ever effected in the world without opposition and disturbance?—Excitement on such a subject as this is good and commendable. An apostle has said, "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." And what better thing can awaken the zeal, and engage the warm efforts of Christians, than the purification of the churches from the pollutions induced by masonic connection? Excitement in this case is not to be dreaded or shunned. Like the winds, thunders and storms in the natural world, they would purify the moral atmosphere, and conduce to the health and vigor of the body of Christ.

Whether the time has yet come, and the public mind is sufficiently prepared for the commencement of this great and necessary work in this region, may be a matter of doubt. Of this every church must judge for herself. But that the time *must* come, and will *soon* come, when the unholy connection between the Church and Masonry will be totally dissolved, there can be no question.—The good work of separation has already begun in various parts of our land, and among several denominations of professing Christians, and it *must* and *will* progress, until every adhering Mason shall be excluded from the pulpit and the church, and no more be ordained or admitted as members of the body, who hold any communion with that mystery of abominations. O happy day, when the church, purified from her present guilt and defilement, shall shine in all the beauty of holiness, and "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."